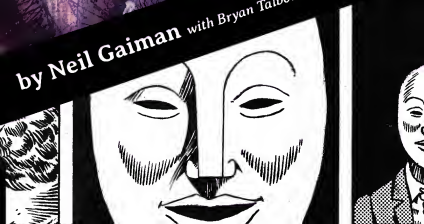


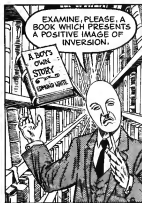
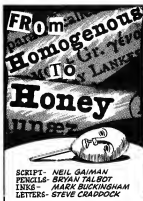


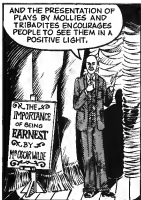
**An Honest Answer** and Other Stories



by **Neil Gaiman** with Bryan Talbot and Dave McKean







# An Honest Answer

from  
NEIL GAIMAN  
illuminated by  
BRYAN TALBOT  
inscribed by  
SONJA CURTIS

"Where do you  
get your ideas?"

IT'S A QUESTION  
WRITERS ARE ASKED  
ALL THE TIME. AND WE  
DON'T TELL ANY OF YOU  
HOW WE GET OUR IDEAS  
BECAUSE IT'S A SECRET  
—DEEPLY, INEXTRICABLY  
LINKED WITH THE  
ENTIRE CREATIVE  
PROCESS

NOW, I HAVE  
RECEIVED EXCLUSIVE  
PERMISSION TO LIFT THE  
LID ON THE CREATIVE  
PROCESS — JUST  
THIS ONCE

RAY CLOSE  
ATTENTION. WE'RE  
GOING TO FOLLOW THE  
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES  
THAT WILL GIVE US  
THIS VERY STRIP

LIKE YOU,  
I HAVE NO IDEA  
WHAT WONDERS  
ARE IN STORE  
FOR US

NOW — THE  
SECRET IS, YOU  
OPEN YOURSELF  
TO THE INFINITE

IT'S A DOODLE  
—WATCH

HELLO?  
INFINITE? IT'S  
ME, NEIL.  
TOO HOO

I NEED  
AN IDEA FOR A  
FOUR-PAGE  
COMIC STRIP

OH, AND WHILE YOU'RE  
THERE, IF YOU'VE GOT ANY-  
THING FOR THIS INTRODUCTION  
I PROMISED TO WRITE FOR AN  
ANTHOLOGY OF MINOR LATE  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
METAPHYSICAL POETS —  
I'D APPRECIATE IT

THEN  
YOU MAKE  
A CUP OF  
TEA

HELLO?  
INFINITE?  
IT'S ME AGAIN  
—NEIL

STILL OPEN.  
UM. HELLO...  
?





AFTER THAT IT WAS  
JUST A MOPPING-UP  
OPERATION.



LISTS WERE  
MADE UP OF  
THE FEY AND THE  
QUESTIONABLE  
IN HISTORY.



WE REMOVED THEM ALL  
ALONG WITH THEIR  
IDEAS AND THEIR  
CREATIONS. NO MORE  
MONA LISA.

NO MORE  
DAVID.

NO MORE  
CARRY ON  
CAMPING DHALGREEN  
BOOKS OF BLOOD  
AND GUTS IN  
HIGH SCHOOL ...



CAN I HAVE  
THE NEXT SLIDE  
PLEASE?



THE WORLD  
TODAY IS A SIMPLER  
PLACE. WE'VE TAKEN  
OUT ALL THE  
COMPLICATIONS.



ALL THE  
SQUARE PEGS AND  
THE PAINFUL AND  
THE STRANGE.



IN OUR UTOPIA,  
LACKING CULTURAL  
REFERENT FOR DEVIANCY,  
ALL ARE HAPPY WITH  
THEIR LOT ...

EVERYBODY IS  
EXACTLY THE SAME.



ISN'T IT  
SWEET?



"(THE CLAUSE IS AIMED AT) THE  
WHOLE GAMUT OF HOMO-  
SEXUALITY, HOMOSEXUAL ACTS,  
HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS,  
EVEN THE ABSTRACT CONCEPT."  
— LORD CAITHNESS,  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER 1988.

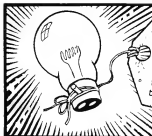


A MESSAGE  
IS ACTUALLY  
COMING FROM  
THE INFINITE

THERE WE GO



A gently menacing story of sensual horror, in which a man's life begins to progressively reconfigure itself in terms of the types of fiction he's responded to over the years. By the end of it he's an adult man in a threatening, Noddy-type land, terrified of what happens next...





A CAT BOOK?

A FUNNY CAT BOOK?

DID I ASK FOR A FUNNY CAT BOOK? HAVE I DONE ANYTHING TO IMPLY THAT I BELIEVE THE UNIVERSE IS IN ANY WAY DEFICIENT IN THE MATTER OF FUNNY CAT BOOKS?

After that, the infinite offered up, in short order...

a haiku

TOO SHORT-

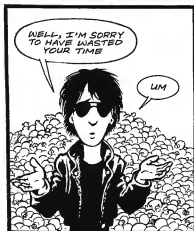
two pantoums

TOO MUCH LIKE HARD WORK

a particularly filthy sonnet

TOO DIFFICULT FOR BRYAN TO DRAW CONVINCINGLY-





The following Thursday the author received a note from the Infinite, apologising for the interruption in service, and asking if it could have its funny cat-book idea back, because there were people who needed it.

But it was too late. It had already been used as the introduction to an anthology of minor Late-Seventeenth Century Metaphysical Poets.





*A thousand worlds  
and every world's a door.*



*The lights go out, I think I think of you*



*But in these times  
it's so hard to be sure.*



*There's black blood  
slowly clotting on the floor*

*There is no crime though somewhere there's a clue*

*Not far away the game begins anew*



*Adhering to the bottom of my shoe.*



*I get the feeling I've been here before.*



*I've never been intentionally obscure*



*I've never been intentionally taboo.*



*I get the feeling I've been here before.*

*But in these times  
it's so hard to be sure.*

